DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/GDC/MR
REVIEWED BY [illegible] DATE 1/10/83
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Tab B

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The Secretary of State presents his compliments to His Excellency the Ambassador of Israel and has the honor to refer to the Ambassador's Note of June 10, 1967 concerning the attacks by Israeli aircraft and torpedo boats on the United States naval vessel U.S.S. Liberty, which were carried out shortly after 1400 and 1430 hours local time, respectively, on June 8, 1967 while the U.S.S. Liberty was engaged in peaceful activities in international waters.

At the time of the attack, the U.S.S. Liberty was flying the American flag, and its identification was clearly indicated in large white letters and numerals on its hull. It was broad daylight and the weather conditions were excellent. Experience demonstrates that both the flag and the identification number of the vessel were readily visible from the air.

Beginning at about 0515 hours local time on June 8, 1967, and at intervals thereafter prior to the first attack, aircraft believed to be Israeli circled the U.S.S. Liberty on a number of occasions.

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Accordingly, there is every reason to believe that the U.S.S. Liberty was or should have been identified, or at least her nationality determined, prior to the attack. In these circumstances, the later military attack by Israeli aircraft on the U.S.S. Liberty is quite literally incomprehensible. As a minimum, the attack must be condemned as an act of military irresponsibility reflecting reckless disregard for human life.

The subsequent attack by Israeli torpedo boats, substantially after the vessel was or should have been identified by Israeli military forces, manifests the same reckless disregard for human life. The silhouette and conduct of the U.S.S. Liberty readily distinguished it from any vessel that could have been considered as hostile. The U.S.S. Liberty was peacefully engaged, posed no threat whatsoever to the torpedo boats, and obviously carried no armament affording it a combat capability. It could and should have been scrutinized visually at close range before torpedoes were fired.

While the Ambassador of Israel has informed the Secretary of State that "the Government of Israel is prepared to make amends for the tragic loss of life and material damage," the Secretary of State wishes to make

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clear that the United States Government expects the Government of Israel also to take the disciplinary measures which international law requires in the event of wrongful conduct by the military personnel of a State. He wishes also to make clear that the United States Government expects the Government of Israel to issue instructions necessary to ensure that United States personnel and property will not again be endangered by the wrongful actions of Israeli military personnel.

The United States Government expects that the Government of Israel will provide compensation in accordance with international law to the extent that it is possible to compensate for the losses sustained in this tragic event. The Department of State will, in the near future, present to the Government of Israel a full monetary statement of its claim.

Department of State

Washington,

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Tab E

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[illegible] ATTACK ON THE USS LIBERTY

By MICHA LIMOR
Written for The Associated Press

TEL AVIV—The torpedoes were ready for firing when the three Israeli torpedo boats moved in on the Navy ship moving slowly on a southeasterly course off El Arish.

Not one of us on those torpedo boats could have suspected that this was the beginning of an incident which was to cause a long drawn-out international wrangle.

The morning of June 8, the fourth day of the six-day war, the Israeli torpedo boats were at their base refueling and taking on provisions.

On the ground, the capture of Sinai and of the western bank of the River Jordan had already been completed. On the naval front, the torpedo boats had already seen action and had spent many hours patrolling Israel's western border.

The crews were mostly members of the regular navy and only a minority of them reservists like myself.

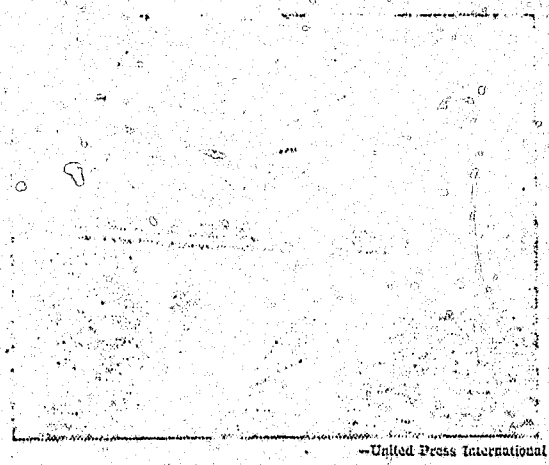
Equipment in Order

Over the years we had been trained to operate these torpedo boats—of French manufacture, some 10 years old—against the possibility that they would be put to the test.

Over the past days the gunners showed great accuracy. The instruments worked as they were supposed to, and the little vessel functioned with maximum efficiency.

On June 8, the sun was high in the sky when we received notification of an unidentified vessel some 12 miles off the El Arish coast, suspected of being an enemy craft.

In five minutes were were moving out in formation,



—United Press International

Torpedo boat sweeps by Liberty.

An Israeli naval reservist, Micha Limor, was aboard one of the torpedo boats that attacked the U. S. Navy communications ship Liberty. Here he tells the graphic details.

torpedo boat after torpedo boat, toward the deep sea.

We spotted the objective once on the radar screen. She was moving on a steady course, southeast at about 10 knots. We sailed toward her at an increased speed, looking at her through binoculars.

Planes Open Attack

Two of our planes flew over our heads a few minutes afterward. We saw them circle the ship several times, and then dive into the attack. They fired two rockets into the ship, and plumes of smoke rose. Then the two jets headed away toward the coast.

About 2,000 yards from the ship, the high masts and the many weird antenna showed that this was a warship. The side of the vessel was blotted out by smoke, and apart from three numbers along her side, we could not discern a thing.

We could see no flag on the mast, nor was anyone to be seen on the decks and bridge.

For seamen, this can mean only that this was the enemy.

We spent several minutes demanding identification by radio and by heliograph, she gave no answer. It also seemed that she had managed to control the fires and continued on a stable course.

It was decided to pass by her in battle formation and demand identification by firing across her bow. So we moved past at a tremendous speed, firing across the empty bridge and the bow. Suddenly, a sailor started firing at us with a heavy machine gun from the bridge. We directed cannon against him and a moment later he fell. Thus there was no doubt that we were faced by the enemy. The prolonged refusal to identify herself, the absence of any flag, the shooting at us, and above all the weird contraptions on the ship left us without doubt.

Torpedo Attack Made

We wanted to make the ship surrender without sinking her. Once again we circled, firing again and again. This had no effect. No one appeared. No one reacted. The shells caused little damage to the hull and the ship proceeded on its way.

Nothing can annoy a torpedo boat crew more than being ignored. The order was given to prepare for a torpedo attack. We drew up along the left side of the boat at full battle speed. Just as in dozens of training exercises we reached the right angle and range and let go.

One of the torpedoes hit the boat amidships. There followed an enormous explosion and a huge water spout.

And then fires broke out and the boat leaned sideways. We waited for survivors as is customary for seamen—whether friend or enemy. But no one appeared on deck.

Suddenly, something fell into the sea. One of our fellow-men approached and picking it up from the waters found it to be a rubber lifeboat with the lettering "U.S. Navy."

That was the very first sign of identification.

U.S. Flag Appears

A moment later there arrived on the scene the helicopter that was to have picked up prisoners. He hovered over the boat and then signaled us:

"They are raising the American flag."

It was crystal clear we had hit friends.

Dozens of shells, rockets and torpedoes were needed to drag a sign of identity from them The showing of the Stars and Stripes at the very first stage would have prevented all that happened subsequently.

At the same time, it turned out later shore emplacements also learned that the attacked vessel was the American intelligence boat Liberty.

We recived orders directly from the officer commanding the navy to give all necessary help. So we approached the Liberty and offered help, shouting through a loudspeaker.

Then an officer appeared for the first time on the bridge and screamed "Go to hell!"

Learning they did not need aid, we left. And the Liberty returned to its regular operation. It seemed any other ship would have sank.

It was only later that we learned how many casualties were caused by our torpedoes.

"If this had been our boat," one of our officers said the following day," we would have done everything to save the wounded and not the boat."

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